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BACK FROM SLAVERY.

HORRORS OF SLAVE LIFE IN THE SOUDAN.

MISSIONARY ROSSIGNOLI ESCAPES FROM BONDAGE

The Mahdi Vents His Hatred, of Christendom on the Whites in his Domain—Sisters of Charity Are Held in His Harem.



NE CAN HARDLY tell from the photograph from which this picture was made which is the white and which the black man. The older man is an Italian by birth, and about twelve years ago, when he went to the Egyptian Soudan, he had as fair a skin as any southern European. Exposure for years to the tropical sun has made him as dark as the light colored natives from whose land he has just escaped. It was lucky for him that the sun changed his hue, for had his complexion remained fair he never could have quitted the capital of the fanatical Mahdists and made his way for hundreds of miles north to the civilized world. The man is Rossignoli a missionary who went to the east-Soudan as a missionary a short time before the Mahdist revolt closed that country to all outsiders. White men have not since been able to get into it, nor have the unfortunate twenty or thirty Europeans who were in the country when Khartoum fell been able to get out. The only exceptions are Father Ohrwalder and two sisters, who fled three or four years ago and, after many hairbreadth escapes and much suffering, reached Cairo, and Father Rossignoli, whose arrival in Egypt was reported a few days ago.

Until a few months ago Father Rossignoli was living at Omdurman, the Mahdist capital. A number of the white captives who showed that they could make gunpowder or perform other skilled service were employed



ROSSIGNOLI AND GUIDE by the Mahdi, and are still at work for his successor and have been fairly well treated. Others have led miserable lives as slaves. One white man who escaped and was captured, suffered death by hanging. Some of the white women, including sisters of charity, have long been harem inmates. Other prisoners have been permitted to shift for themselves, picking up a living as best they might. They have made cakes or articles of clothing and peddled them on the streets, and have led a most unhappy and precarious existence. Rossignoli was one of these unfortunates.

He was a long time perfecting his plans for escape. He secured the friendship of the black Soudanese boy who is shown in the picture. The boy took his life in his hand when he agreed to help the friendless foreigner to get away from his bondage. He took the risk, however, partly from friendship and partly because he knew he would be handsomely rewarded if they ever reached Egypt together. He owned a camel, and this animal was to be their means of transportation.

One day Rossignoli pretended to be ill. He remained in his hut, where several of his acquaintances called to see him. A little before daylight he said he thought exercise would do him good, and so he started across the river to take a walk among the ruins of Khartoum. When darkness came he reached the appointed rendezvous on the northern edge of the fallen capital, which, since the Mahdists killed Gen. Gordon and sacked the town, has been abandoned to bats and wild beasts. He found his faithful boy and the camel laden with supplies. For the long journey down the Nile then they started in the night on their forced march. There is no telegraph to intercept them, but there is danger that they would be overtaken and also that they would arouse suspicion and be taken into custody.

Very few particulars of Rossignoli's flight have yet been published. It is known, however, that, unlike Ohrwalder, who avoided the towns, he made straight for Berber, the largest settlement on the Nile between Omdurman and Egypt. He stopped there for two or three days to rest, and told everybody that he and his comrade were traveling to visit friends further north. Several times he thought his game was up, for he met people who were suspicious of his statements. He lived every hour in fear that he would be seen, cast into prison, and finally led back to Omdurman to certain death. He suffered great privations in the desert march north of Berber, and many a time his strength and courage were at the lowest ebb. But he struggled on, good luck befriended him, and at last, unmet and almost dead from exhaustion as he was, he and his black boy staggered into the fortification at Wady Halfay. The long agony was over, and Rossignoli once more breathed free air.

It is said that a detailed account of his years of captivity among the dervishes will be published soon after his return to Europe. Meanwhile he has received a hearty welcome to Cairo. From that city was forwarded the photograph from which this picture has been made.



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